

MONTANA CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPERVISOR AND ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS

If you missed the Supervisor and Administrator of the Year Awards here are the winners. If you weren't at the Convention this is a chance to recognize those individuals.

SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR

This year, many supervisors were nominated, but alas, it had to be narrowed down to three. These three are excellent representatives of all the men and women that so generously dedicate their time and talents to serve their conservation districts. Your dedication and commitment to serving the people of Montana and your creativity in doing so, is never more evident and necessary than it is today. Thanks to each and every supervisor.

The three finalists were *Rick Sandru – Ruby Valley CD, Ron Talcott – Powder River CD, and Wayne Maas –Lincoln County CD.*

Supervisor of the Year, this year goes to Rick Sandru of the Ruby Valley Conservation District

Rick is first and foremost a rancher, and after that, he is a visionary, a leader, and a man who exemplifies cooperation to find solutions to issues. He recognizes the value of working well with state and federal agencies and understands the value of inviting unusual partners to the



table to work on solutions together. He leads by example and initiates efforts to address concerns. He supports a proactive approach to weed management and has worked to develop spray days with the county, grazing lessees, the USFS and private citizens which have expanded weed management efforts over the last five years.

He sits on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working group, where he represents grazing permittees and the CD to proactively manage resources in the Beaverhead-

Deerlodge National Forest; He supports the coexistence of livestock and wildlife, including predators; he has been a champion of the carcass management in partnership with a many partners; he affected modifications with Senator Tester's Forest Jobs and Recreation Act and worked with Montana Wilderness Association, Greater Yellowstone Coalition and other permittees to modify the Snow Crest Wilderness Study areas.

As a board member, Rick goes above and beyond the call of duty to support the board, the CD employees, financially supporting every event that the Ruby Valley CD and Ruby Watershed hosts, and has personally financed continuing education for staff members.

Above all else, Rick always wears a smile under his cowboy hat and is known as the jokester on the board. We feel that Rick exemplifies service to his community, his profession, and his conservation district and he fully deserves the supervisor of the year award.

Supervisor Runners-Up

Ron Talcott of the Powder River Conservation District has been a dedicated supervisor for 49 years. He studies all the conservation district issues and makes common sense decisions based on experience and facts and rarely misses a meeting. Born into a ranching family, he is committed to youth education, every year teaching 5th grade students about conservation on his ranch and was also instrumental in starting a local youth educational scholarship program.

Ron's dedication doesn't stop with his work on the conservation district board – his is a founding member of the Powder River Historical Society sharing his expansive knowledge of the area's history, has served on the weed board for 42 years, and has been a Mason for over 50 years.

Ron, Ron's children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren continue to live in County in which Ron has served so faithfully over the years. He exemplifies the dedication and service to conservation in his area.

Wayne Maas – Lincoln CD began as an associate supervisor for the Missoula Conservation District in 1988. Wayne now serves as a supervisor and “go to” guy for the Lincoln Conservation District. Through Wayne's leadership, the Lincoln Conservation District has promoted water resource management and land stewardship. He is knowledgeable in many aspects of wise stream management and is always supportive and available to property owners for advice on developing projects. Wayne spent many hours preparing drafts and making revisions to the CD's 310 rules, heading a committee to ensure the most effective manner to administer the 310 law for Northwest Montana.

During two occasions, Wayne found himself preparing arguments to support the Lincoln CD's difficult violations. Due to Wayne's diligence (with a little help from Don MacIntyre), the LCD was successful in mitigating corrective measures to bring the creek back to its original state.

Wayne has contributed his time and energy on serving on the Natural Resources Youth Camp board and as an educator; he spends many hours conducting rolling rivers demonstrations. In addition he has been involved in the Montana Watershed Inc., the Kootenai River Network, the Northwest Montana RC&D, and was appointed to NACD's Forest Resource Committee.

For these reasons, we believe Wayne is worthy of mention as a supervisor exemplifying the role of conservation district supervisor.

ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR



There are 70 CD employees across the state. Without the creativity, get-er-done know how, and extreme talents of conservation district employees, we all know conservation districts wouldn't be where they are today. Thank you

CD employees for your contributions to the conservation efforts of our 58 conservation districts. The nominees for the 2016 administrator of the year for 2016 from left to right are Julie Goss – Richland CD, Julie Ralston – Bitterroot CD, and Carie Hess – Petroleum CD.

ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR 2016- Julie Ralston

In her 17 years of service, Julie has had an extraordinarily positive impact on her conservation district, her area, and the state. She is hardworking and direct, yet personable. She projects an air of professionalism and is gifted in dealing with the public, agencies, and non-agencies. She is recognized by her peers as a leader and a mentor. She is always ready to help any administrator, whether new or seasoned with the benefit of her expertise. She has been instrumental in organizing meetings that benefit all eleven of the districts in her area as well as statewide. People say "I can depend on her," "she's helped me," or "I love her."



She organizes and participates in local educational activities - -she presented the rolling river trailer to over 600 students in a three-day event; and she speaks on behalf of 310 issues to the local realty board, local groups, and other conservation districts. Although she is reluctant to admit it, she is widely recognized as a 310 expert. She is willing to step out of her comfort zone for the good of all conservation districts. Her supervisors rely heavily on her expertise and practical experience in all aspects of conservation district business.

Her conservation district is a hotbed of 310 activity. In addition to her regular load of 310s, she played a key role in the controversial Mitchell Slough case which went all the way to the Montana Supreme Court. This case has had a significant impact in establishing a valuable precedent.

Her presence in the conservation district world makes all of our jobs better. Thank you, Julie, for work well done. Congratulations.

Julie Goss has been with the Richland County Conservation District since 1998. Since starting



with the conservation district, Julie continues to build and maintain more than working relationships with those she works with --- she creates friendships. She has been front and center with conservation districts and leading the conservation district employee organization lending her talents and sound advice to any conservation district employee needing help. She has helped with or spearheaded many projects, including a cooperative project to build, purchase, and operate a dredge for irrigators to clean out irrigation pump sites on the Missouri River. She helped implement a weather station program, works her butt off at the Envirothon, helps her board with water reservations, and she really stepped up by agreeing to host this convention in Sidney so eastern Montana CDs can showcase the end of the state that they love. Thank you, Julie, for all you do for your conservation district, conservation districts in your area, and the state. Your hard work, creativity, and kindness do not go unnoticed.

Known to all who know her as possibly the most organized person on the planet, **Carie Hess- Petroleum CD** is recognized for her professional, timely assistance which is counted on by the Petroleum Conservation District, the Missouri River Conservation District Council, and Musselshell Watershed Coalition. Carie supports these three organizations by helping them keep track of budgets and reporting, taking minutes, printing handouts, arranging venues, reviewing outreach materials, and guidance in capacity building. As if that weren't a big enough job, she assists conservation districts across the state with their office organization. She is the go-to person for administrative and organizational questions for several groups in Montana and helps with orientation for new employees in other conservation districts.



Carie is known for her cheerful, friendly demeanor and her willingness to help. She drops whatever she is doing to help with others with grant applications, reports, or meeting details – while still keeping her conservation district running smoothly. Carie is an important part of, not only her conservation district, but is an important part of the business of conservation in her area and in the state. Carie, thank you for all you do.